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CURIOSITIES OF FRENCH DUELLING.

WHEN giving, in a recent number, an account of the laws of French duelling, we promised our readers to return to the subject, and to review the history of duels in that country. For the fulfilment of our promise, we may take as our chief guide the interesting *Histoire Anecdotique du Duel* of M. Colombey, who, not content with the combats of his own country, professes to narrate the history of duels in all times and in all places.

According to some authors, duelling is of the very highest antiquity, its origin being ascribed to Cain, in whose invitation to his brother, as given in the French translation: 'Let us go forth,' they profess to discover the exact terms of a cartel. France, no doubt, borrowed the custom directly from Germany, where first we find the duel regarded as an appeal to Heaven. Divested of its religious character, the duel becomes the Judicial combat and the wager of battle, till, losing the sanction of the law, it arrives at its modern position as simply an 'affair of honour.'

The judicial combat became rare in France after the fourteenth century: during a period of one hundred years, only four examples of it are found. A great blow was given to it in 1385 by the unfortunate result of a duel fought in the presence of Charles VI. and all the court: the judgment of God, as it was impiously called, proved *unfavourable to a man who, accused of a crime, protested his innocence*, and was thereupon compelled to take his part in a duel ordered by the parliament. Being conquered, he was hanged on the gallows, which formed a part of the preparations of the battlefield; but some time afterwards, another man declared himself guilty of the crime which had led to the duel. This was, in fact, the end of the judicial combat. Henceforth, the parliaments systematically refused to lend their sanction to these appeals; and the duel became simply a question of obtaining 'satisfaction' for wounded honour.

Royalty, however, continued to preside at hostile meetings, which, indeed, were only permitted on formal demand to the king. The sceptre thrown

into the arena was the signal for discontinuing the combat; and the most infuriated champion did not afterwards dare for his life to strike a blow. One of the earliest memorable duels took place in the sixteenth century, between De la Châtaigneraye and De Guy Chabot, better known as Jarnac. The altercation which led to this duel took place in the reign of Francis I., but it was Henry II. who at last gave the sanction to a duel refused by his predecessor. Jarnac sent to his adversary a most formidable challenge, calling on him to provide more than thirty kinds of arms for use on horseback as well as on foot, and even named some half-score or more of horses of various breeds, and differently caparisoned. 'Jarnac wants to fight me, mind and purse,' was the observation of La Châtaigneraye, who, nevertheless, by recourse to friends and the king, his good master, managed to furnish his contingent to the excessive pomp which decorated the 'emptying' of this old quarrel. La Châtaigneraye, who was a notorious swash-buckler, had prepared to celebrate right royally his expected victory, but he reckoned without his host. The famous 'blow of Jarnac' brought him, hamstrung, to the ground; and, mad with rage, he died refusing to admit his defeat. Jarnac's fighting appears to have been perfectly fair, and it is therefore rather hard on his memory that the proverbial expression which embalms his name should be applied to a stroke treacherous as well as fatal. Henry II. was so moved by the result of this combat, that on the corpse of the slain man he swore never to sanction any more duels. There had been such sharp work already, that a writer of the beginning of the seventeenth century states the number of gentlemen killed in duels since the first edict against them at six thousand.

A duel, singular as well for its tragic ending as for the moral drawn from it in those days, occurred in the reign of Francis II. Achon and Matas, hunting with the king, got into a dispute, which they resolved to settle with the sword. Before long, Matas sent the weapon of his adversary flying into the air. 'Pick up your sword,' said he, 'and learn to hold it better another time. Go: I

pardon you, and let us hear no more of this, young hot-head.' While mounting his horse, however, Achon fell on him, and ran him through. Achon's friends were strong at court, while those of Matas were in disgrace, so that Matas was only regretted and 'blamed,' says Brantôme, 'for that he thus neglected the good-fortune which put his enemy at his mercy.'

Duelling had at last got to such a height, that in 1566 it was classed among the worst crimes, and made punishable with death. But this severity only gave to the practice the sweetness of forbidden fruit. Duels were fought on the slightest pretexts, and where they were wanting, on none. In less than twenty years, eight thousand pardons had been granted to gentlemen who had killed their adversaries. One day, two duellists crossing the Seine for the purpose of fighting, see others hunting about for boats in which to follow and prevent the combat. They hasten their boatmen, and scarce on shore, they cry out in chorus: 'Quick, quick! they're coming to separate us.' A few passes, and both fall dead. At another time, a madman named De Gensac persists in fighting two men at once, and to those who try to stop him, he exclaims: 'What! have you never seen one man against two? The histories are full of it. Come on both! I'll get myself into the Chronicles!' And, in truth, it was almost worth while to have one's exploits recounted in the deliciously naïve language of Brantôme. Witness his reflection on a fight, three against three: 'Some say that M. le Baron de Biron, more courageous and quick of hand, killed his man the first, and went to the help of the others; in which he did right well, and shewed that with his valour he had no small judgment and foresight!' Bussy d'Amboise, who took advantage of the massacre of St Bartholomew to kill a relation with whom he was at law, had, before this exploit, signalled himself as a duellist. A gentleman named St Phal called his attention to some X's in a piece of embroidery; Bussy, to bring on a duel, swore they were Y's. On this weighty subject there came off a duel of six on each side. Bussy was wounded, but soon sent another challenge, and even had the audacity to offer battle to the captain of the king's Guards, sent to stop this second fight. It needed the intervention of the king and his brother to put an end to this almost interminable quarrel.

The game went bravely on: from 1589 to 1608, eight thousand duellists fell; and King Henry IV. would have been only too glad to take his share of the work. 'If I were only your friend,' he wrote to Duplessis Mornay, 'and not your king, there is no sword which would more readily come out of its scabbard for you than mine.' In this reign, Lagarde Valon had, by his exploits, awakened the envy of another cut-throat, named Bazanez, who accordingly sent to his rival a hat, threatening to come and take it and the new wearer's life at the same time. Lagarde wore the hat, and went about seeking Bazanez, whom he did not know by sight. Finding one another at last, the two bravos went to work. A tremendous blow fell right on the top of Bazanez's head—in vain: the skull was so hard that the sword glanced off. The second blow had more effect. 'There's for the hat,' said Lagarde; 'and there for the feather; and here for the band.' Bazanez was fast losing blood, but was not done for yet. He rushed on his man, and by main force knocked him down. 'Beg for your life!' he cried,

as one after the other he dealt Lagarde fourteen blows between the neck and the waist. 'No! no!' cried Lagarde at each stroke, and with a desperate effort he bit off half the chin of Bazanez, and knocked in the back of his head with the pommel of his sword. Wonderful to relate, both survived—one to die some years later in an ambushade, the other to become the terror of the country into which he withdrew. A friend of his, in this retirement, aped his airs: 'I only mend my pen with my sword!' said he to a poet. 'No wonder you write so ill!' was the reply.

The rage for combats at last got too much even for the easy king, and a new edict of great severity was issued; but the fighting went on all the same, and the king shut his eyes. The mania even increased in the reign of Louis XIII. We read of two men who get into a hogshead, and there hack one another to pieces with knives. Two others, on a simple question of precedence, clasp the left hands, and poniard each other. At length, after law upon law, came out the celebrated edict of 1626, of which such use was to be made by Richelieu. François de Montmorency, Count of Bouteville, the most notorious duellist of that day, could never hear it said of a man that he was brave without at once going off to challenge him. He had fought more than twenty duels. To defy the new edict, he fixed on the Place Royale, at three o'clock in the afternoon, as the place and time of what was to be his last combat. Richelieu insisted on his execution: 'We must cut the throats of these duellists or of your majesty's edicts;' so Bouteville died, in spite of all intercession. Edicts and he could, indeed, not well live together. Condemned to death by default before this, he had caused the proclamation to be torn down by force, and pursuit getting hot, had made for the frontier with an escort of two hundred armed men.

Severe as Richelieu was on duelling grandees, he appears, from the Chronicles, to have been very tolerant of combats among the smaller fry. The Baron d'Aspremont, for example, almost fought three duels in a single day. Beginning in the morning, he killed an adversary, who only contrived to pink him in the leg. Troubled by this wound, the baron, unable to eat at table, amused himself by throwing at his friends pellets of bread, one of which chanced to strike a gentleman, who considered that he had thereby received an affront. Having run this second adversary through the arm, the baron was enlisted as a second in a third duel, which, however, was stopped. The Chevalier d'Andrieux was another bravo of the same stamp. At thirty years of age, he had killed seventy-two men. Preparing for another duel: 'Chevalier,' said his adversary, 'you'll be the tenth man I shall have killed!' 'And you my seventy-third!' replied the Chevalier, whom the result proved to be in the right.

This humorous gentleman was in the habit of promising to his disarmed adversaries their lives if they would forswear their hopes of salvation; this done, he would cut their throats, that, as he said, he might have the pleasure of killing them body and soul.

Ludovic de Piles and his brother were journeying towards Paris, and arriving at Valence, entered an inn, and asked for supper. The landlord declared that he had only eggs and cheese. 'For whom, then, is that spit turning?' 'For four officers,' 'Go and ask them to allow us to join

them.' This request met with a prompt refusal. Ludovic and his brother supped wretchedly, and went to bed in a room divided from that of the officers by a thin partition only. Ludovic, enraged at the treatment he had met with, lay wide awake, and heard jests at the expense of the pair who had fared so ill. In the morning, the two brothers started betimes, but before they had gone a league, 'I've left my purse behind,' cried Ludovic. 'Do you go on; I shall come up with you by dinner-time.' Returning to Valence, he went straight to the room of the officers. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'I am one of the two travellers with whom you refused to share your supper. You had a right to do this, but not to make your jokes upon us. I don't like it, and I ask satisfaction of all of you.' One after another, the four officers fall, and Ludovic, rejoining his brother, rejoices that he has recovered his purse. Not a word of the duels, of which the brother hears for the first time from Cardinal Mazarin, who advises him to keep Ludovic out of the way.

Cyrano de Bergerac made a point of always holding himself in readiness to act as second to whomsoever might need his services. He was a most skilful swordsman, but was blessed by nature with so long a nose, that all his adroitness could not save it from an occasional cut. These multiplied in the immense number of duels he fought, till his notched nose became quite a curiosity, one, however, which it was dangerous to look at too closely: a dozen men paid with their lives for a simple inspection of the monstrous and disfigured cartilage. One of his exploits was to throw himself into the midst of a band of assassins, of whom he killed two and wounded seven, while the rest took to flight.

The mania for duels was not confined to the sterner sex; witness the exploits of the better-half of Château-Gay de Murat. This virago used to appear on horseback in great boots, with her petticoats tucked up, and carrying a sword at her side, and pistols at her saddle-bow. Having a bone to pick with a M. Codières, she called him out. He 'came up smiling,' and played about with his sword, till he found that the lady was seriously bent on sending him to the ancestral vault. Changing tactics, he pressed her so hard, avoiding wounds, that at last she dropped to the ground through sheer fatigue, and had to cry for quarter. Quarrelling afterwards with some gentlemen, she happened to meet them at the chase, and made preparations to charge. Her groom cried out: 'Come off, madam—come off; they are three against one.' 'Never mind,' quoth the dame; 'no one shall say that I met them without charging them.' And charge she did for the last time, for her adversaries had the bad taste to kill her.

In the gallery of *femmes vaillantes*, La Beaupré holds a foremost place. After an exchange of strong language with La des Urlis, she rushed away, and came back, bringing two swords. Des Urlis took one, thinking no ill; but La Beaupré pressed her hard, wounded her in the neck, and would certainly have killed her, had not timely help come.

Further on in point of time comes La Maupin. This magnificent swordswoman had been lightly spoken of by Dumesnil, a male fellow-performer at the opera, and, in fact, the eccentricities of her manners afforded wide scope for comment. Determined to have satisfaction, without any waste of

words, she dressed up as a man, and waited for Dumesnil as he left the theatre. As soon as he appeared, she touched him with her sword, and bade him draw. Dumesnil, who was not in a duelling humour, tried to sheer off, when La Maupin produced a stick, and laid it lustily about his shoulders, finishing by taking his watch and snuff-box. The next day, the actor was complaining at the theatre of having been set on by a band of robbers, who had ill-treated and despoiled him. 'You lie,' broke in the virago; 'it was my doing. I thrashed you because you hadn't the heart to accept my challenge; if you want proof, look here at your watch and snuff-box.' On another occasion, she was at a ball in male costume, and managed to provoke three gentlemen. They all went out to fight, and the actress killed the three, one after the other.

Another singular affair was the duel between the Marquise de Nesle and the Comtesse de Polignac, in the Bois de Boulogne. The former proposed pistols; the countess accepted, and generously gave her adversary the first shot. The Marquise fired, and missed, breaking a branch from a tree. 'Anger makes the hand shake,' was the cool comment of the countess, who fired, and carried away the tip of her adversary's ear.

Returning to male duellists, we light on M. de Sainte-Foix, a terribly quarrelsome gentleman, who retired from the army, and took to literature, without abandoning his warlike habits. Here is a specimen of his manner of whiling away an idle hour. He was one day in the Café Procope, when one of the king's Guard entered and ordered a cup of coffee and a roll, adding in an undertone to himself: 'That will do for my dinner.' 'You're making a miserable dinner,' said Sainte-Foix, addressing him. He repeated this several times, till at last the Guardsman got angry; a fight ensued, and Sainte-Foix was wounded. 'It's all one,' he said: 'a roll and a cup of coffee are a wretched dinner.'

'You smell like a goat,' was a polite observation he once made to a gentleman, who forthwith challenged him to fight. 'To what purpose?' said Sainte-Foix. 'If you kill me, you won't smell any better; and if I kill you, you'll smell a great deal worse.'

The history of the duel that Voltaire would have fought, well known as it is, is too interesting to be omitted. He was dining with the Duc de Sully, and in a discussion which arose, differed in opinion from another of the guests. 'Who is this young fellow who contradicts me in so loud a voice?' asked the Chevalier de Rohan Chabot, a worthy predecessor of the scandalous cardinal, perhaps one of the biggest blackguards of the eighteenth century. 'Sir,' replied Voltaire, 'it is a man who does not trail a great name, but who honours that which he bears.' Rohan left the table trembling with rage, and host and guests alike agreed that it was a happy deliverance. Some days later, Voltaire was again dining in the same house, when a servant told him that he was required below for a charitable purpose. Without a moment's delay, the great man descended, and made for a hackney-coach, into which he was requested by a plaintive voice to enter. On doing so, he was seized by one man, who held him while another administered five or six blows with a switch. A little way off was the chevalier in his carriage, protected by four hired cut-throats. 'That's enough,' he said, and gave the order to drive on. Voltaire returned to the

house, and adjured the duke to regard as an insult to himself this outrage on a guest. The host refused, however, even to make a deposition. From that moment, Voltaire renounced for ever a house which he justly regarded as, by this neglect, covered with dishonour. In language, every word of which is more wounding than a sword-thrust, he next addressed himself to the authorities. 'I most humbly represent that I have been brutally assaulted by the brave Chevalier de Rohan, aided by six cut-throats, behind whom he was boldly posted. Ever since this time, I have sought to restore, not my honour, but his; a task too difficult.' Failing in this application, he took lessons in fencing, and as soon as he could manage a sword, went with a friend to the Théâtre Français, and opening the box of the chevalier: 'Sir, should matters of business not have caused you to forget the outrage of which I have to complain, I trust that you will make me amends.' The thrust was galling. This scion of the House which for motto had, 'King am not; prince deign not; Rohan I am,' was believed to do a smart business in petty, usurious loans. He accepted the challenge, and named his own place and time; then taking care to let his family know of the affair, they procure a *lettre-de-cachet*, and Voltaire is thrown into the Bastille, whence he emerges at the end of twelve days, only to go to England in the custody of a warder. Clearly, nothing could provoke the chevalier; Voltaire abandoned his attempts.

Two officers of the Guards had a quarrel, which ended in a blow. The aggrieved person plastered on his cheek a piece of taffeta, the size of the palm of his hand, and then politely invited the giver of the blow to accompany him to a quiet spot. The result of this promenade was, that the wearer of the taffeta gave his adversary a wound bad enough to lay him up for two months. Before leaving the ground, he quietly drew from his pocket a pair of scissors, and just cut off from the piece of stuff a little circle. The wounded man was beginning to get about, when a visitor was announced by the servant. 'It is a gentleman who wears a piece of taffeta on his face; he says that you expect him.' 'Oh, ah; just tell him I'll come down.' Another combat ends with the same fortune, and the scissors are again brought into play. These duels went on with the requisite intervals, till at last the taffeta had decreased almost to a point. 'I'm at the end of my piece,' said the wearer C. to T., whose body was a mass of scars, 'and you're at the end of your troubles.' And so he was, for in the last duel, preluded by this little address, T. was killed.

The great Revolution so absorbed men's minds, that eccentric duels disappear for a while. Except that some are remarkable from the presence of political notabilities, there are few which would interest the reader. Combats became more frequent under the Empire, though an officer who was frequently engaged in duels was certain to earn the profound contempt of Napoleon. From the mass of uninteresting duels, let us pick out one worthy of mention, if only from the fact that it came to an end in 1813, after a duration of nineteen years. Fournier, a captain of hussars, and a most inveterate duellist, had, without provocation, called out and killed at Strasbourg a young man named Blumm, the only support of a large family. Fournier's skill was so great that this affair was regarded as little better than a murder. On the evening of

Blumm's burial, General Moreau gave a ball, and as it was suspected that Fournier would present himself, orders were given to Captain Dupont to refuse him admittance. The consequence was that Dupont received a challenge, which he gladly accepted, in the hope of at last chastising the insolence of a hardened cut-throat. Fournier fell wounded. 'The first point to you,' he exclaimed. 'Then you mean to go on again?' 'Yes; and before long, I hope.'

A month later, it was Dupont's turn to be wounded. Fournier proposed pistols; but Dupont refused to accept a weapon which would give his adversary all the advantage. Fournier was so skilful with the pistol, that frequently, as the men of his regiment passed on horseback at a gallop smoking, he would, with a bullet, knock the pipes out of their mouths. The two were so nearly equal with the sword that the contest seemed interminable; but they resolved to persevere till one or the other should admit himself to be beaten. To regulate their combats, the terms of an agreement were come to: '1. Whenever Dupont and Fournier shall be within thirty leagues of one another, each shall go half-way, in order that they may meet sword in hand. 2. If one of the two contracting parties should be prevented by his military duty, he who is free shall be bound to journey the whole distance, in order that the rules of the service and the requirements of the present treaty may be made to harmonise. 3. No excuses shall be accepted save those arising from military duties. 4. The present treaty being concluded in good faith, there can be no departure from conditions agreed on by the parties.'

The agreement was religiously adhered to, and the warmest friendship could not have created in the two officers a more eager desire to avail themselves of every opportunity to meet. 'My dear friend,' wrote one of these eccentric combatants, 'I shall be at Strasbourg on the 5th of November, about noon. Wait for me at the Hôtel des Postes. We'll just have a touch at one another.' Every now and then, the advancement of one or the other would interpose delay. This obstacle removed, Fournier (let us say) would write thus: 'My dear Dupont, I learn that the Emperor, recognising your deserts, has just made you a general. Accept my sincere congratulations on a promotion which is only what you deserve. Your nomination is a double source of joy to me. On your account, I rejoice, and on my own also, for your promotion will give us the opportunity of an early meeting.' At last they are both generals, but the combats go on. At one time, Dupont runs Fournier through the neck, and pins him to a wall, just like a butterfly in a case, but dares not change his position, as, if he does, Fournier can run him through. There they remain till their noise attracts the attention of some officers, who separate them. Dupont at last began to get weary of this endless contest; he was thinking of marrying, but must first settle with Fournier. Hunting him up, he proposed to finish up with pistols. To equalise the chances, it was decided that the combat should come off in a little wood. Accordingly, on the appointed day, the last act opened. Advancing warily, the two at last caught a glimpse of one another. Each immediately took refuge behind a tree. Dupont, inferior in skill, had recourse to artifice. He quietly lifted up his coat-tail, and pushed it beyond the tree; a ball whizzed

through it immediately. A few minutes later, the mouth of his pistol appeared on the other side of the tree, while, at the same time, just a corner of the hat projected, as if the wearer were peeping out to take aim. In a moment, a ball carried the hat away among the bushes. 'Your life is in my hands,' said Dupont; 'but I won't take it.' 'As you like,' said Fournier. 'Only mind,' continued the victor, 'I reserve my right to put a couple of balls into your head whenever I like; so don't come near me.' And thus ended this long quarrel.

On the authority of the Comte de Pontécoulant, we give the following. Colonel Barbier-Dufai, a noted duellist, insulted Raoul X—, a young soldier, solely with the intention of provoking him to a duel. Finding, however, that Raoul was a mere boy, a fact disguised by his large stature, the fighting colonel made excuses, and wished to withdraw. Raoul refused to consent to this course, and swords were drawn. The disparity of the combatants was so great, that the colonel, after four times disabling his adversary, proposed that some other mode of fighting should be found. It was impossible to use pistols in the street; what was to be done? At this moment, the rumble of a hackney-coach was heard, and Dufai found the wished-for solution. 'Stop this cab,' he said to the seconds, 'and run and exchange these swords for a pair of daggers of equal length.'—'This is what I propose,' he added to Raoul: 'we will get into the coach, armed each with a dagger, and bound to one another, with our right arms only free; then let the doors be shut, and the coach go twice round the Place du Carrousel.' Raoul accepted; the proposed arrangements were made; and, at a signal, the cab started, two seconds on the box-seat, the other two behind. As the horses, driven by the seconds, dashed round at a pace unequalled in the history of hackney-coaches, one cry was heard, then a second, then all within was still. The journey finished, the seconds rushed to the doors, and, from a pool of blood, drew out the two combatants. Raoul was dead; the colonel, pierced with wounds, and with his face torn by Raoul's teeth, yet managed to survive.

Slight as were the means at their disposal, the officers taken prisoners by this country during the long war with France, contrived to sustain the reputation of their country in the matter of the duello. Here are two instances, which we give on the authority of the *Annual Register*. 'A duel was fought by two of the French prisoners on board the *Samson* prison-ship lying in Gillingham Reach. Not having any swords, they attached to the ends of two sticks a pair of scissors each. The transaction took place below in the prison, unknown to the ship's company. One man, wounded in the abdomen, died.' Again: 'Two French officers on parole in Reading, fought a duel in a field not far from the New Inn, on the Oxford Road, when one of them received a ball, which passed through the back part of his neck. Unable to procure pistols, they had agreed to decide the affair with a fowling-piece, at about fifty paces, by firing alternately. The first discharge was conclusive. The officer who fired rendered every assistance to his wounded antagonist. He accompanied him in a post-chaise to his lodgings, where a surgeon dressed his wound, which is said not to be dangerous.'

From the *Annual Register* also we give particulars of the following duel, of which, as we have found no mention of it in the French histories, we are inclined to think that it may perhaps be no

more the record of an actual encounter than the affair of Raoul X— (we have grave doubts as to the reality of personages designated by this initial in French anecdotes) and Dufai. The quarrel was between M. de Grandpré and M. le Pique, and the combat came off at, or perhaps we should say above, Paris in May 1808. 'Being both men of elevated minds, they agreed to fight in balloons, and in order to give time for their preparation, it was determined that the duel should take place on that day month. Accordingly, on the 3d of May, the parties met at a field adjoining the Tuileries, where their respective balloons were ready to receive them. Each attended by a second, ascended his car, loaded with blunderbusses, as pistols could not be expected to be efficient in their probable situations. A great multitude attended, hearing of the balloons, but little dreaming of their purpose; the Parisians merely looked for the novelty of a balloon-race. At nine o'clock the cords were cut, and the balloons ascended majestically amidst the shouts of the spectators. The wind was moderate, blowing from the north-north-west, and they kept, as far as could be judged, within about eighty yards of each other. When they had mounted to the height of about nine hundred yards, M. le Pique fired his piece ineffectually; almost immediately afterwards, the fire was returned by M. Grandpré, and penetrated his adversary's balloon, the consequence of which was its rapid descent, and M. le Pique and his second were both dashed to pieces on a house-top, over which the balloon fell. The victorious Grandpré then mounted aloft in the grandest style, and descended safe with his second, about seven leagues from the spot of ascension.'

It is hard to doubt, we confess, after the natural touch, 'wind moderate, blowing from the north-north-west.' Surely the force of duelling can no further go; so here, in spite of the temptation offered by numerous anecdotes of more recent duels, we conclude our article.

A FORTUNE IN A NAME.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS—CHAP. I.

'As if we didn't know how we spelled our own name!' angrily exclaimed my wife. 'Did we always use the final *e*? They seemed to be very particular about that!'

'Ours isn't a case like that of Browne or Smythe,' I observed, a little nettled. 'The Satterthwaites never did spell it without the *e*. Try it—it looks preposterous.'

'Besides, we really might not have been permitted to have a grandfather! When I said I knew that your grandfather spelled it so, they grew quite excited, and asked, could I prove you ever had a grandfather who wrote his name so? I only wish you had been at home.'

I tried to soothe my wife by assenting that it was very mysterious, and that the persons who had made these odd inquiries did not appear to have been over-polite. I, however, made a pretence for going back to glance round the entrance-hall, anxious to see whether this was some new metropolitan device for occupying the attention of the female members of households, while petty felony was perpetrated. I was relieved to find that the proper number of extra articles of attire were still hanging upon the pegs; our two best umbrellas I was glad to notice safe in the stand; nor had the

door-mat been rolled up and conveyed away. It did not appear that the inquisitive persons were thieves; but if this was reassuring in one sense, it was perplexing in another. I determined, therefore, to put a further question or two to my good little Letitia.

'How many persons were there?' I asked.

'Two.'

'Do you recollect how they were dressed?'

'Oh, they were dressed pretty well; dark clothes, something like yours. One wore spectacles, I recollect.'

'Did they say they wanted me to sign anything?'

'No; and I hope you will do no such thing,' was eagerly added.

'I meant that perhaps they were going round with a parochial memorial—somebody wanting a new gas-lamp in the street, or something of that kind,' I explained, sitting down to the tea-table with as light an air as I could assume. 'Very likely, however, they are somebody from the church: we have a fresh clergyman, and they often collect information about the inhabitants. Generally two make the visitation in company, and generally one of them wears spectacles.'

'Nonsense!' was the decisive answer, the flow of tea into my cup being prematurely arrested. 'Would the clergyman have your name printed in a book? or if he had it printed in the rate-book, would he have any need to send here about it?'

I informed Letitia that they did not print the rate-books; but she had before mentioned a book in connection with these inquisitive individuals, and the recalling of that fact quite upset the easy conclusion I had been attempting in my own mind—namely, that the visitors were simply upon some such common-place errand as I had just hinted at. The further information I elicited from my wife on this point, only made the whole affair more strange. It was a rather large book, she said (though I made out that, in her excitement, she was not at all reliable in this particular: once she asserted that it was the size of the house-keeping book, and then again that it was as big as the *Illustrated London News*); it was a volume bound in crimson, she added, with gilt lettering on the back, and also upon the sides, and it appeared to be printed in close double columns. I had seen advertisements announcing that certain persons kept a printed record of heirs of property in Chancery, and of unclaimed dividends at the Bank of England! Trying, by a cynical laugh, to sneer down in my own imagination the wild suggestion that the inquiries had some connection with matters of this kind, I asked if the individuals had a legal look—did they seem as though they wanted the successors to an estate?

'I thought of that at first,' quickly said my wife; 'but lawyers are educated men, and one of these mispronounced common words. Then, dear, who is there on your side that has property likely to go a-begging in that way?'

'If,' said I, feeling that this latter remark was one not to be directly met, 'uneducated persons come here making impertinent inquiries about me, shew them to the door at once.'

'But there is something in it,' followed up Letitia. 'They wanted to know how long we had been in London, and what was your occupation. They were as urgent about what your business was as about the final e.'

'I wish I could satisfy them as clearly about the one as the other,' I remember muttering to myself in reply.

'I didn't tell them anything about it, excepting that, when they asked if you had ever been connected with the manufacture of drain-pipes, I said certainly not.'

'Drain-pipes!'

'Yes. I hope that was not a pretext!—Why did you start?' inquired my wife, with a very nervous air. 'It is the duty of a husband to be candid with his wife.'

'A pretext!' I, in turn, demanded. 'Whatever can you be thinking of?' In saying which, I happened to upset the toast. 'You know that I never had anything to do with the manufacture of drain-pipes, and you also know that I have no secrets from you.'

'Then drain-pipes is not a slang word, meaning something else? I am sure you ought not to have any secrets, no matter how grave they were; for if you had in any way been imprudent, you know I'—
— She paused, with a tear coursing down each cheek.

This was making the thing rather serious, and my anger was fast rising against this couple of unknown inquisitors, who had come with their preposterous inquiries, sowing the seeds of apprehension, though fortunately, not of distrust, in my wife's mind. I may explain here that I had not long before removed to London with my wife from a remote part of the country, in the not very wise hope of pushing my way in a commercial circle into which I had been offered a certain degree of introduction. I, however, found that book-keeping by double entry was an art already known in the metropolis; and that, in fact, my services were by no means so indispensable as I had fondly hoped to find them. Owing to one disappointment and another, I was almost beginning to think of turning my back upon the inappreciative capital, the calling in of a broker to No. 3 Acacia Road, Camberwell, having already presented itself to my mind, when on returning in the evening from a not very successful journey city-wards, I was met by my wife at the door with the news I have related.

'I do think you would not keep a secret from me,' sobbed Letitia, later that evening. 'You are sure you are not entangled in any way?'

'Entangled!' I recollect echoing.

'Drain-pipes! It sounded so very curious!'

'When these fellows come to-morrow,' I indignantly answered, 'I will make them explain that I am not entangled in any way; and, having done that, I shall feel tempted to kick them out of the house, for their audacity in coming here at all to unsettle your mind.'

I submit that I had a justification for falling into ill-temper; for my wife had told me this pair of impertinents had announced the intention of presenting themselves again at my house at half-past ten o'clock on the following morning! Before going to bed that night, I went carefully over the premises, to see that windows and doors were safe: for I had heard of burglaries being planned in some similar fashion.

CHAPTER II.

About eleven o'clock on the following forenoon, my prediction, uttered half-an-hour before to my wife, that we should hear no more of the fellows, was flatly falsified. They arrived! I had the

advantage of inspecting them beforehand as they came up the short walk through the small garden at the front, Letitia having triumphantly observed them from the window as they turned in. They were middle-aged men, well-dressed, but certainly looking neither like lawyers nor church curates; and, of course, their being burglars was now out of the question. Who, then, were they? I had time to notice that one of them did carry a large red book under his arm. I confess to feeling a little agitation, but I rallied when, upon their being introduced into the room, I found they both were at least as excited as I was. The latter of the two, the one who wore spectacles, took the lead, and after making a rather clumsy apology for renewing the intrusion of the previous day, he informed me that his name was Hill, and that that of his companion was Black. Those cognomens, certainly, were commonplace enough. He then turned to Mr Black, and received from him the red book, which, as soon as it was opened, I discovered was nothing more terrible than the newly-published edition of the *Post-office Directory*. Referring to a column under the heading 'S,' my attention was directed by his finger to the entry 'Satterthwaite, R., Acacia Villas, Camberwell;' which, truth to tell, I was rather surprised to find given there so accurately.

'That,' mildly said Mr Hill, 'I believe is your name?' And you spell it with the final *e*, as there given?'

'Yes; but I wish to know why you are making these inquiries?' I, in reply, demanded.

'If all turns out well, we have a business proposal to make to you,' answered Mr Hill, scrutinising me over, instead of through his glasses.

'Business?' broke in my wife, unable to restrain her excitement. 'Has your coming anything to do with property left to us?'

'No,' they each said, and both shook their heads, as if they regretted that it had not. Then Mr Black pursued the conversation, and, at the first sentence, I identified him as the one whom Letitia had described as uneducated. 'Your good lady said you never was in the drain-pipe-making line,' he eagerly remarked; 'but would you mind going into it?'

'Drain-pipe making! I know nothing whatever about it; and if I did, I have no money to risk in any such speculation.'

'Quite right,' encouragingly remarked Letitia. 'There are many schemes started in London, we know, but we are not intending to mix ourselves up in any of them.'

'We should not want you to find any money,' hurriedly explained Mr Hill. 'We would do that.'

'You would find the money?'

'Yes,' they both quite unhesitatingly replied.

'Then what is it you want me to do?' I asked.

'Only to be about the premises;' and Mr Black grinned. 'But, first, we should want you to turn your attention a bit to pipe-making. Will you do it? Will you?—'

Mr Hill no doubt perceived my bewilderment, for he turned to his companion, and, addressing him, said they had better put the thing more plainly before me. His friend, in spite of his excitement, obediently yielded, and, falling back a pace, Mr Hill again came to the front. He stated, in just so many words, that he and Mr Black were thinking of starting in the business of manufacturing drain-pipes, and they would be glad, if their

further inquiries were satisfactory, to make me their partner!

'I agree with you, Letitia,' I said, a negative having impulsively escaped from her the moment the last word was out.—'My wife,' I added to Mr Hill, with what was no doubt a sage shake of the head, 'had an uncle who was ruined by a partnership.'—

'But we would make you safe in any way you liked to name,' boisterously broke in Mr Black, whose excitement seemed to be increasing.

'If there could be any arrangement made at a fixed salary,' suggested Letitia, 'that would be another thing.'

'But I know nothing about the business,' I again reminded them all.

'It is absolutely necessary that it should be a partnership,' emphatically said Mr Hill.

'Certainly,' repeated his friend.

'Then there is an end of it.—The whole matter is altogether unintelligible,' I added, after a minute's pause on both sides. 'You must pardon me, but either you are making some great mistake, or you cannot be in your senses. You come to me, a stranger in London'—

'That is just it,' put in Mr Black, rubbing his hands gleefully. 'Your lady told us you had no relatives here.'

'One who knows nothing of drain-pipe making,' I went on.

'Exactly,' and Mr Black chuckled.

'Offering yourselves to find the money.'

'Every penny of it,' said Mr Hill, in his turn, growing eager.

'And asking me to become your partner'—

'But you will not do anything of the kind,' severely added Letitia.

Mr Black and Mr Hill, looking both a little embarrassed, retired to the hearth, and there held a whispered talk, I glancing at my wife in stark amazement, and she signalling to me to remain quite firm in the matter. The secret conference did not occupy more than a couple of minutes; then Mr Hill, as before, became the spokesman. He said their proposal would naturally seem a curious one, and they could not just then explain it more fully; but to satisfy me that they were in earnest, they would at once give me twenty pounds, if I would promise not to go into partnership with anybody else in the drain-pipe-making business. I motioned to Letitia to leave the room, and myself made a slight *detour*, so as to get within reach of the fire-irons, as being the best available weapons of defence. The men, it was clear, were madmen, escaped from some asylum.

'You are a gentleman,' very complimentarily said Mr Black; 'and we'll take your promise. We was the first to come to you, and if you'll say you won't go into partnership with nobody else, we know you won't.'

'Here is the money,' tersely added Mr Hill, stroking out flat upon the table four five-pound Bank of England notes. They certainly had a newish look, but the paper seemed to be of the white, shiny, crisp, genuine kind. 'We will see you again in a day or two,' he went on, 'when we shall have matters more in shape. It is all perfectly right, and we shall be able to make you see your way in the affair. We understand it to be a promise, and there is the money'—pushing the notes towards me.

'How can I take money in any such way?' I

demanding in perfect astonishment. 'I never so much as dreamed of going into partnership. I tell you again I know nothing at all of drain-pipes.'

'That doesn't matter; it will all be right,' soothingly answered Mr Hill, waving the money from him.

'I know everything about pipes,' enthusiastically said Mr Black, grinning, and coming near to me. 'But you must turn your attention to it, just to answer questions. If you could hit on any alteration yourself, it would be capital: if it wasn't for the better, it wouldn't much signify, so as it wasn't for the worse much. To call it an "improved pipe"—that would be the thing,' he added, chuckling immensely at some idea of his own. 'You'll soon hit on an alteration, I know.'

'You mean that you believe I shall invent a new drain-pipe!' I echoed in despair, looking from him to my wife, whom I found gazing with an air of fascination at the notes on the table.

'No, but you might alter the old one without injuring it much,' said Mr Hill. 'We will not detain you longer;' and he bowed himself towards the door.

'The old pipe!' I mechanically repeated, staring after them as they both withdrew, each repeating that they would soon communicate with me again.

I and Letitia, with the money lying between us, confronted one another in utter bewilderment; then we spontaneously rushed to the window, and watched our extraordinary visitors down the garden-path. We could see that they were closely conversing; and as they turned about to shut the gate, they had a look of satisfaction on their faces, like men who had just completed a gratifying transaction.

'I am not to go into partnership with anybody else in the drain-pipe-making business, and one of them believes I shall discover an improvement in those articles!' I repeated, summing up the proceedings.

'Perhaps the notes are forgeries!' suddenly suggested Letitia, her womanly suspicion rallying.

We, however, found that they were not counterfeits, for I at once went out and changed them. They were the easiest twenty sovereigns I had then ever earned; afterwards, I earned many more just as easily.

TURRET-SHIPS.

THE idea of covering the sides of war-ships with thick iron was first carried into effect during the Russian war. The French and ourselves each built some vessels to carry iron armour four-and-a-half inches thick. The French used theirs at the bombardment of Kinburn, but they did not get close enough to try whether the protection was effective. After the war, the French built *La Gloire*, a broadside wooden ship, armour-plated; and then we began our *Warrior* and *Black Prince*, and some other broadside iron-clads. Soon after this, Captain Coles wrote to the Admiralty, and proposed his cupola-ship, which differed from the more recent turret-ship in having a dome-shaped instead of a flat roof on the turret. About the same time, Mr Ericsson made a similar proposal to the American government. Our Admiralty had a cupola constructed, put up on board the *Trusty*, one of the old floating-batteries, and tried off Shoeburyness. Sixty-eight pounders were fired at it; and the result was generally considered favourable to the

cupola; but it was unexpectedly discovered that the armour-plates of the *Trusty* (with no backing) were not shot-proof. A round shot pierced one side, and then knocked a plate off the other side of the ship. This, however, although it proved that iron sides were not, as at first thought, impregnable, was not accepted as a conclusive proof of their failure, though, undoubtedly, it had some effect upon the action of the government, and prevented them from spending as much money as they otherwise would have spent upon ships which, after all, were only somewhat less vulnerable than unarmoured ships. The government then instituted a series of experiments at Shoeburyness, the result of which was more favourable to the system of armour-plating; and we now can calculate beforehand what shots a certain plate will effectually resist. This confirmed the Admiralty in their resolution to keep on building iron-clads; and soon Captain Coles had two ships conceded to his plan. The *Royal Sovereign*, which had been nearly completed as a wooden three-decker, was cut down, armour-plated, and fitted with four turrets; and an iron ship, the *Prince Albert*, was designed to carry the same number of turrets, and was built by contract.

Meanwhile, the fighting qualities of iron-clads were tested effectually, and the whole question settled in their favour, in a quarter where such an occurrence was least expected. The world was astonished by news that in Hampton Roads, a hastily improvised iron-clad had destroyed the Federal fleet of wood-vessels, and had in her turn been beaten by a small turret-ship. Then all the world began to build iron-clads; and it was only now to be settled whether turret iron-clads or broadsides were best—a question which is still undecided.

As turret-ships were invented simultaneously in England and America, so there are two varieties—the English and the American, each of which I must describe separately. As the turrets may be looked upon as a substitute for the gun-deck of an ordinary war-ship, we must first take as our basis an ordinary iron-clad *minus* a deck, with the usual means of propulsion, and the usual accommodation for crew and stores. As we think it necessary that all our war-ships should be able to sail as well as steam, we must provide the ordinary masts and rigging—with this important reservation—that all in the line of fire of the turret-guns must be movable, so that the deck can be cleared before going into action. Our ships differ in this respect from the American turret-ships: they depend entirely upon the engines for propulsion; but each is accompanied by an unarmoured consort, which can take it in tow, in the event of the engines being out of order, and can also carry such stores and coals as the iron-clad has not room for. We like the decks of our turret-ships to be at least six feet above the water; not merely, as is commonly supposed, to enable the guns to be used in rough weather—that might be managed (even if the deck were level with the water), by placing the gun-port higher in the turret—but to make them safe, comfortable, sea-going ships.

The Americans start with the idea that a war-ship should be merely a raft to carry guns, drawing as little water as possible, and presenting the smallest possible target for shot—only, in fact, requiring to be manned by stokers and artillerymen. They accordingly place the upper-deck level

with the water, closing it in around the turret, so that the sea may wash over it without affecting the comfort or safety of the crew; and they are content to drive the ship through instead of over the waves. They thus save a great weight of armour; while they adduce the instances of the *Miantonomoh* crossing the Atlantic, and the *Monadnock* rounding Cape Horn, as proofs of their equal seaworthiness with our ships. Some of our naval men, on the other hand, will tell you that crossing the Atlantic in very fine weather, and rounding the Horn by taking some few months in the voyage, and so securing the same favourable conditions, are not sufficient proofs of a vessel's seaworthiness; and then, again, although the American war-ship does not shew much of a mark for the enemy's fire, yet, as she is only just above the water, if one well-directed shot were to pierce her armour, and spring a leak, she might take in enough to sink her in a few minutes. Again, as the upper-deck is placed so low that the sea washes over it, there is no means of communication between the lower-deck and the outer world except through the turret; and this in action would be a very serious disadvantage. To complete the description of the ship proper, I must tell you that our turret-ships have iron bulwarks above the deck, to keep out the sea; these are in short lengths, and are hung on hinges, so that they can be let down when the guns are to be fired.

The hull of the English turret-ship is first prepared for its reception by a hole being cut in the upper-deck for it to pass through, and a platform being built to support it on the deck below. The timber composing the platform is arranged in the form of an immense wheel, the rim being formed by curved pieces of timber, the spokes by huge square logs, and the nave also by curved pieces of timber. Inside the nave is a hollow iron cylinder, which being extended above the platform, forms the pivot about which the turret turns, and is also of sufficient size inside to afford a means of communication with the magazine below. The base of the turret is a similar wheel to the platform, its nave being large enough to encircle the pivot just described. Between the base of the turret and the platform is a system of rods and rollers, made principally of iron—first, a small brass ring encircling the central pivot, then a series of iron rods radiating from it, which form axles to two sets of rollers—one set near the circumference of the turret, the other close round its centre. They support the weight of the turret, and enable it to turn easily upon the platform.

On the end of each of the iron rods is fastened a ring, and also another ring inside the roller, which is thus kept in its place, free to turn round, but not to move in or out. Further—to preserve the wood both of the turn-table and of the base of the turret from injury—the parts of the surfaces upon which the rollers rest, and which rest upon the rollers, are covered with iron plates. And now for the curved upright surface of the turret. This is formed, in the first place, by vertical iron frames or girders of what is technically called T-iron (a section at right angles to the length being in the shape of a capital T), resting upon the base, and reaching to the top of the turret. They are arranged at intervals of two feet in a ring near the circumference of the base of the turret, so that the cross-stroke of the letter T is nearest the centre. Above the

deck of the ship, where the turret is exposed to the enemy's fire, this ring or hollow cylinder is completed by the spaces between the frames being filled in with teak-wood. A lining of half-inch iron plates is attached to the frames inside the cylinder; and stout iron bars are bent round it diagonally at intervals and in opposite directions, so as to form a lattice-work. This is covered over with teak, seven inches in thickness; and then come the armour-plates (six inches thick), secured by large bolts through all. To support the weight of wood and armour, iron plates are placed below the deck, one outside each T-frame, and connected with it, their lower edges resting on the base of the turret, and their upper edges fitting close to the under-side of the backing and armour-plate. The spaces between the frames are left open for communication between the turret and the lower-deck of the ship. Lastly, a flooring is laid upon the framework of the base, and the top is roofed in with beams and thin iron plates, just enough to keep out falling pieces of shells.

The turret can be turned by four men, by means of a winch fixed on the lower-deck of the ship, with a cog-wheel working into cogged plates attached to the base of the turret, so that the base of the turret seems to be a large cog-wheel turned by that of the winch. It can also be moved by the handspikes or the blocks and ropes belonging to the guns. For the two guns in each turret are provided ports just their width, but of sufficient height to allow them to be elevated or depressed. No spare room is required on each side of the gun, because, when it is wished to alter the direction of the fire, the turret is moved round. The guns are mounted on slides like those of an ordinary war-ship.

To prepare the American ship for the reception of the turret, no hole is cut in the deck, as in the English ship; the upper-deck being lower, in that case the turret is relatively higher. The edge of it rests upon a ring of iron fastened to the upper-deck of the ship; but this does not take much of its weight, the greater part of that being borne by an upright iron pillar in the centre of the turret. This pillar is stationary, and rests upon the lower-deck, which is strengthened just at that place to receive it. It is kept upright by ironwork connecting it with the upper-deck. The turret itself is not made like ours, but is much simpler in its construction; its curved surface is made up of thin iron plates riveted together, so that if you could see a section of it cut parallel to the deck, it would present the appearance of a large ring of iron made up of about a dozen small rings, its whole thickness being about fifteen inches. Across the top of the turret is a strong iron beam, forming a diameter to the ring, and having a hole in the middle of its length, to receive the top of the pillar, which is made larger just below, so that the beam may rest upon the collar thus formed. Their touching surfaces are made very smooth and fair, since nearly all the weight of the turret rests on this part of the pillar, and thus causes great friction at the joint. From the middle of the beam to opposite points in the lower circumference of the turret, stretch diagonally two iron tie rods, which would appear to support most of the weight, or rather to hang it to the middle beam. The roof of the American turret is formed by a strong iron grating. The lower edge of the curved surface is covered with a gun-metal ring, to turn upon the iron ring,

which, as has been already said, is fastened to the deck. Above one of the turrets is situated the pilot-house, a fixture supported by the central iron pillar. This is constructed like the turret, although, of course, it is very much smaller (about a third the diameter); it contains the steering-wheel and compass. The sides of the turret are continued upwards to within two feet of the height of the top of the pilot-house, by thin iron-plates, which curve out at their upper parts, so as to throw off the water; and on top of all is a promenade deck, railed in, and covered with an awning.

The American turret is turned by a donkey-engine, connected with it by a series of cog-wheels; an arrangement which enables it to be moved round with greater facility than ours, but which is exceedingly likely to be disarranged; and we can now discuss the respective advantages of the two plans. I have said that the American monitors are made light and small, as we think, at the expense of seaworthiness and other important qualities; but through this the enemy has very little mark for his fire, except the turret itself; and the chances that he will hit that a direct blow, are very small indeed. And again, as the American ships are smaller, and of lighter draught than ours, they are available for rivers, where ours would be useless. It may be said that the American monitors might, in their harbours and at the mouths of their rivers, defeat any hostile fleet; while, with our turret, and still better, with our broadside ships, we could meet the enemy at sea. Their system answers their purpose, inasmuch as they have only a compact territory to protect. We, who have possessions all over the world, must pay more for our ships, because they must be able to go all over the world, and be fit to encounter any weather. The American plan of building up the sides of the turret, we believe to be very faulty, having ascertained by experiment that a six-inch solid armour-plate is at least equal to twelve inches of armour made up of thin plates riveted together. The strong backing and frames of our turrets increase the efficiency of the protection at least by one half; so that the total thickness of the American turret's sides being fifteen inches, we think we have good grounds for believing that, though the armour is much heavier, it is not so efficient as ours. And lastly, as they depend entirely upon machinery for turning the turret, although they are thus enabled to turn it very easily and quickly, yet, if the machinery were injured, the turret would be useless; whereas, in such a contingency, our turrets could be turned by a few simple levers—say the handspikes used for moving the guns.

We have now come to the last division of our subject—the respective merits of the turret and broadside systems. Turret-ships are said to give a greater scope for the fire of the gun; to enable heavy guns to be worked with greater facility; and to admit of the same gun being used on both sides of the ship; so that she need only carry half as many guns as a broadside-ship, and at the same time be equally formidable. It is also said that the turret presents a smaller mark for an enemy's fire, and requires less armour to protect it than a broadside. On the other side, it is said that only in two turrets—namely, the fore and aft ones—is there so much scope for the fire of the gun as is alleged (when there are more than two, they are in each other's way); that pivot guns in the ends of a broadside-vessel are quite as good in this respect

as guns in a turret; that heavy guns can now be worked by machinery in broadsides as well as in turrets; that although the same gun can be used on both sides in a turret-ship, her number of guns cannot be considered as practically doubled, because it is found that guns inside turrets cannot be fired so rapidly as broadside guns, and though the turret presents a smaller mark for the enemy's fire, if it, or the deck near it, were so injured as to prevent its turning round, it would be at once disabled. It is also true that a ship carrying one turret needs less weight of armour than a broadside carrying the same number of guns; but it is said that if there is more than one turret, this is not the case. We will conclude this sketch of turret-ships with Mr Scott Russell's opinion upon the subject: 'But while I thus fully appreciate and record my conviction of the value and efficiency of the revolving turret system, I must proceed to say that its special value belongs to special cases, and that precisely because I should adopt it in some cases, I should not dream of employing it to supersede a numerous broadside of powerful guns. For an armament of two guns, it is perfection; for an armament of four guns, it is convenient; for an armament of six guns, it becomes of very doubtful value; and for more, it is certainly inexpedient. The advantage of a broadside with a battery of considerable length is the great number of guns which can be concentrated in the middle of the ship. Here, it is certain that a much larger battery can be obtained at a given cost, weight, and length of ship by a broadside battery than by movable turrets. . . . When the number of guns is small—say four—and the ship is of sufficient size conveniently to carry them, let her carry four guns in two turrets; but instead of using more turrets where the armament is larger, I should use both systems together. I should place two cupolas, one afore, and one abaft the engine-room; and I should then enclose the whole space on deck between the two, so as to form a broadside battery. The bow turret might sweep two hundred and seventy degrees of the horizon; the stern turret, the same. Both turrets could join either broadside, thus counting for four; and in addition to the turrets in the ship, with sixty feet of engine-room, I should have a broadside of four guns, being eight in all on each broadside; the whole length of battery not exceeding one hundred and twenty feet of the centre of the ship.'

ONE OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER VII.—AT THE WISHING-GATE.

THE kitchen at Ander Farm, or Ander Nook as it was more usually termed, like many a kitchen in Cumberland at the period of our story, in houses of far greater pretension, was kitchen, and parlour, and all. Its windows, which might have been made to command one of the loveliest views in Great Britain, looked out upon the little farmyard, of which a very dirty pond, patronised, however, by some magnificent ducks, and a prodigious midden or dunghill, were the principal features. This last, indeed, was so near the long low dwelling, that it partially overshadowed the apartment in question; and it was not originally a light room. In place of ceiling, huge dark beams of wood crossed and recrossed it, from which, later in the year, black sides of bacon would cluster thickly as grapes in a vineyard; while in the ample chimney

would be suspended by their hind-legs perhaps half-a-dozen whole sheep, which, headless and disembowelled, presented, to one ignorant of that good old Cumberland custom, rather a terrific spectacle, but to the guidman of the house, as he sat with his pipe beneath their comely carcasses, afforded great comfort in assurance of plenty against the coming winter. The hooks for the support of these chimney-ornaments were hanging in their places even now, and gave the idea that some Brobdingnagian fisherman was putting in his lines outside the roof; and that one of them had been so fortunate as to catch an iron pot, from the lidless top of which escaped a savoury smell, in which the connoisseur in broths might have detected onions.

Of articles of *vertù* in this chamber there were none; but immediately opposite the fire, every ray of which was reflected in its polished depths, stood an oak-chest, that would have fetched much money in Wardour Street, Soho. It was of great size, and wore upon its brown-black brow a date of two centuries ago; fruit and flower, and bird and beast were carved over its glossy face and sides in great profusion, if not in exact similitude; and around the keyhole strayed this way and that, like the vague yet complex flourish of a writing-master's hand, some thin tarnished bands of silver. Intense polishing—'elbow-grease' was the homely term—had brought the old chest to such a pitch of perfection that it shone like a mirror; but the precious metal had suffered from this discipline, and was gradually fading away for want of plate-powder. Although similar articles of furniture were by no means rare in the district, contrasting curiously enough with the rudeness and simplicity of their surroundings, this chest was an exceptionally fine one, and constituted the chief pride of old Tyson Harrison, its present possessor, who, though confined to his bed with rheumatism in an adjoining room, caused his door to be left wide open, that he might watch the fire flare and flicker upon the article in question, and calculate how many layers of brown oat-cake were hidden beneath the shining lid. Two spinning-wheels, also of antique but handsome materials, stood near the window, the one of the usual sort, but the other a very large one, on which the wool is spun, the spinner stepping to and fro. Many a year during his long life had hard-working Tyson spent in that honest exercise, and many a thousand pounds (of wool) had he made by it; but he had bidden Niece Mary move it out of his sight now; he could not bear to look upon it since Dr Warton had honestly given him to understand that he would never be up and about again, and far less able to follow his favourite employment. As the disabled sportsman puts away his fowling-piece, knowing he shall never more brush the stubble or the dewy turnips with his eager feet; or as the ancient whist-player, with his memory gone, avoids the green baize-field which can be no longer the scene of his triumphs, so the frugal farmer could not trust himself to gaze upon that representative not only of his chief amusement but of honest toil.

Tyson Harrison had never been a pleasure-seeker, and that which had contributed to swell his store had afforded him greatest satisfaction—at least so long as Niece Mary had ever known him. By many he was called 'close-fisted,' and indeed he was not a generous man, but he had never been an unjust one; and it was pitiful to see the old fellow power-

less upon his bed that afternoon, while the spinning-wheel stood silent in its unaccustomed corner, and the shadows lengthened and deepened about him like the drawing near of Death. His mind was busy where his body could not be—in his meadows, or about his little farm; and his ear was vigilant to catch each well-known sound—the frightened rush of the sheep driven by the colly-dog, or the low of the cows coming in from pasture, which instantly represented to his eye the operation without. He would never behold them more except in that way, and it troubled him to think how things might be going on without his superintendence. Now and again, his thoughts involuntarily pictured how matters would be when he was dead and gone; but he was averse, like most of his class, to this objective view of the matter. It would be time enough to entertain such very serious considerations later on. He had not yet made his will, but he intended to do so on the first convenient opportunity. Niece Mary was his sole heir, but it was necessary that 'the property' (it was ridiculously small to be so entitled, but the phrase pleased old Tyson) should be tied up. Mary, although a good wench, was a romancing, foolish girl, and as likely as not to make a bad match of it. He had given her a piece of his mind about Miles Ripson, a drunken ne'er-do-well, who was sometimes without a sixpence, and at others in possession of more money than could be easily accounted for; and he had heard about her goings on with George Adams, the red-coat; and although he did not believe the girl was such a fool as to think seriously of becoming the wife of either, it was his intention to make such testamentary provisos as should rob her of all attraction in the eyes of such 'trash' as they. Not to do that, would be to fail in his duty to his own, which, said the Good Book that lay upon the little window-seat within reach of his hand, was to behave 'worse than an infidel.'

There was one other volume there beside, *The Shepherd's Guide*—and those two books comprised his entire library. The *Guide* was rather a monotonous volume, having a wood-cut of a single sheep upon each page; but he was never tired of looking at one particular picture. Above the marks of the bodies of the sheep belonging to Tyson Harrison of Ander Nook were set forth with great particularity: 'Cropped near ear, upper key bitted far, a pop on the head, and another at the tail, head ritted, and with two red strokes down both shoulders.' To read this familiar jargon over and over again, afforded him genuine satisfaction—such magical privileges does a little property confer upon its possessors. But although Farmer Harrison's library was thus restricted, his niece had quite a Bodleian upon the shelves of her own little room; volumes which were neither rare nor curious, having indeed all been purchased at various times from travelling hawkers at an almost uniform rate of ninepence a piece, but which Mary reckoned to be the most precious things she had. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the *One-handed Monk*, and *Tales of Horror*, formed her favourite literature by day; but towards nightfall she was apt to grow timid, and to exchange that species of reading for works of a less sensational character, such as *The Pride of the Village* and *The Maid of Buttermere*. She was at this moment engaged in perusing the last-mentioned narrative in the kitchen, but not so deeply enthralled in its dismal details but that ever and anon she threw a glance up at the huge old-fashioned

clock, the hands of which were pointing to near seven o'clock. She had not been out that day, for she could not leave her poor uncle alone, and everybody about the farm who could have filled her place within-doors, had gone down to the wrestling in the vale; but she was now expecting the arrival of a certain person that would relieve her for a little of her charge. She was a kind-hearted girl and an attentive nurse to her uncle, but she had a particular reason for wishing to be at liberty that evening, and the time would have passed very wearily but for her little book. O blessed powers of the printing-press! what benefits have you not conferred upon the watcher, you at whose magic touch the Hours straight take to themselves wings, and anxious care and the pangs of love itself are forgotten! May your Worshipers have a constant charity for those who are not in the true faith, and despise or have no liking for books, for they suffer many things against which there is no antidote. No wonder poor old Tyson, who has read with difficulty his allotted chapters in the Sacred Volume, and has wearied himself with staring at the wood-cut of his spotted sheep, is impatient and cross.

'Mary, hussy!' cries he through the open door, 'what art doin'? Where is my broth'?

'It is not quite ready yet, uncle: you shall have it in five minutes.'

'Ay, it's always five minutes between me and everythin' I take a fancy to; and when the time's over the taste is gone. Give me a pinch of 'baccy'; 'tis in the big horn in the cupboard.'

'I don't think you had better take 'baccy, uncle.'

'Thee kenst nothin' about it, fool. Bring the—Stay, there be the dogs. See if that isn't Passon comin'; it's long past his hour; but then nobody thinks of a poor bedridden old man like me.'

'Nay, I am sure Mr Wilson never forgets anybody, uncle, much less an old friend like you. But maybe he has been to Langsleddle, which is a good step'—

'Ah, coortin'!' interrupted the old man contemptuously. 'A pretty thing at his time of life, and he allus talkin' of the graveyard.'

'But the poor girl was left without a penny, and her father such a friend of Passon's, uncle; he could na well have provided for her in any other way.'

'Yes; you're always for coortin', you are. But I say, there's na fool like an old un. Can't you run out and see whether it be Passon, instead of—I can't see you, but I ken you're readin' some rubbishin' book. So soon as ever I get about again, I'll burn the whole package on 'em, that I weell!'

Scarcely had this barbarous threat been uttered, when the latch of the door was lifted, and there entered an elderly man, of benevolent countenance, dressed in a coarse black frock trimmed with black horn buttons, a checked shirt, a leathern strap about his neck in place of a stock, and with a pair of 'clogs' on—huge wooden-soled shoes plated with iron—a presentment of a clergyman of the Church of England, such as would have turned an Oxford divine scarlet. And yet this gentleman was a pluralist, enjoying the united revenues of the curacies of Sandalthwaite and Arndale, which, together, produced him an income of eight-and-twenty pounds *per annum*. He was also the schoolmaster of both parishes, but as he only took money from such parents as were willing, as well as able, to pay for the doubtful advantages of education, he received per head considerably less than is paid for the mere article of birch at Eton.

Moreover, since the parishioners of his smaller district were very scattered, it was his custom upon the Sabbath to give, after divine service, messes of broth to such as had come from far; and as this involved the cooking of as much fresh animal food as was intended for his week's consumption, the Rev. Robert Wilson lived six days out of the seven chiefly upon cold meat.

'How is your uncle, Mary?' said he in a low voice, and nodding towards the sick man's chamber. Mary shook her head despondently.

'I was afraid so,' continued the visitor. 'I met Dr Warton on my way to—to Langsleddle, and he told me we must expect no change for the better.'

'Why don't ye come in hither, Passon,' exclaimed the farmer peevishly, 'instead of whisperin' with that wench about me? I ain't a-goin' to die yet awhile, I can tell ye.—How 'se your young woman, Passon? Ech, but you're a bold man to wed wi' one as is young enough to be your own wean.'

The colour rushed into Mr Wilson's face, but faded away almost as quickly as it came.

'Yes, Tyson,' said he with a smile (and using the broad dialect of the district, which we may take as spoken), 'I am really going to be married; and it is very kind of the young lady, as you were thinking, to take compassion upon an old fellow like me.'

'Na, na, I didna say that,' answered the sick man, mollified by this humility, and put in good-humour at finding himself with company about him—for both Mr Wilson and Mary were standing by his bedside. 'A gal might do waur, and much waur. I only wish my Mary here was sure of as good a husband as you, Passon. Old age ain't the worst thing that can be laid against a man—and you ain't so very old neither. Besides, why young folks die off now-a-days as likely as old ones. Who would ha' thought of poor Master Charlie being taken away so sudden? You've heard the news, I daresay?'

'Yes, I have, Tyson; and I grieve over it almost as though he were a son of my own. Never did I know so good a lad, nor one who gave such promise for his manhood. Poor boy, poor boy!'

'That's just what Mary says. You know she was up in service at the Hall until I was took ill; and she was for ever talkin' of Master Charlie—makin' a match between him and Miss Evelyn against when they grew up, and fancyin' how he was goin' to be a hero, like the Dook of Wellington, until she began to believe everythin' was really goin' to happen, just as in her rubbishin' books; and now the poor young fellow's drowned.'

'Yes, and who got him drowned?' exclaimed Mary, her black eyes flashing through her tears: 'who but his own aunt, Miss Selina, as poisoned his uncle's mind against him, and got him sent out to them furrin parts'—

'Hush, hush!' interposed Mr Wilson reprovingly.

'Miss Woodford could not possibly foresee such a sad mischance, and doubtless is sorry enough now for any harshness which she may have shewn towards the poor lad.'

'She sorry! not a bit of it, sir,' answered Mary indignantly. 'You don't ken her as I ken her, who have lived under the same roof. Nobody who wasn't a real bad un could behave as she does to that little angel, Miss Evelyn. And the dear child will break her heart now, and there will be none to comfort her.'

'There is always One to comfort us, whether we

are old or young,' answered Mr Wilson gravely; 'and as I am about to speak of Him to your uncle, we had better be alone for a little. It would do you good to take a run upon the hill yonder, Mary, for you look pale; I daresay you have had no fresh air to-day.'

We have said that Ander Farm was placed in a sort of cup, on the hillside, so that while the house and its belongings were clustered together snugly enough, the mountain sloped up immediately behind it rugged and limitless; and in front, to one who stood upon its brink, the whole world of Lakeland seemed to be stretched before his eyes. Mere love of the picturesque did not, however, induce the good folks of Sandalhtwaite to climb so far as the Nook, the approach to which was gained by a zigzag road through a hazel copse; but it had two other attractions which made it irresistible, at least to the young—the one was its nuts, and the other was its Wishing-gate. In the proper season, the little wood quite swarmed with village children; at every turn, you came upon some youthful group which reminded you of Morland's pictures, and in the still blue air you heard on all sides the 'crack, crack' of the shells, giving way before their sharp white teeth; but all the summer through the Wishing-gate had its devotees. It was a prosaic-looking gate enough; and there was a dreadful Notice stuck upon a board beside it, threatening various pains and penalties against whomsoever should deface it; but it opened upon Paradise. As one stood leaning upon its topmost bar, there seemed, to a lover of the picturesque, scarce anything to wish for. Immediately beneath, lay the vale of Sandalhtwaite, with its long mere studded with one or two rocky islets, and crossed by its bridge of planks, at that distance looking even frailer than it really was. The coach-road—for, notwithstanding Mr Woodford's disparaging remarks, there was a coach-road—was hidden by the wood, so that the whole scene seemed shut out from the world in jealous seclusion; and yet there was many a sign of human tenancy.

Through the thick fir-clump opposite Black-narrow, the sun would strike at noontide upon some window of Dewbank Hall, or in the evening, as now, the lights could be seen in its upper chambers. The night, too, must be dark indeed when Mr Wilson's white-washed cottage did not gleam from beneath its sheltering sycamores. The village alehouse, too, flashed its welcome early, where just now there was high revel after the wrestling-bout, although no murmur of it could reach so high. There was no sound in that July evening save the trickling of the beck from Ander Tarn (far up the mountain), which, to the quiet wood, all night, warbled its sweet tune. Much of this was lost upon the majority of those who visited the Wishing-gate, and I am afraid it was lost upon Mary Harrison. She had hastened thither while Parson Wilson was attending to her uncle's spiritual needs, for reasons quite independent of the scenery. She was a hearty believer in the *genius loci*; and she had come thither to wish her wish. Many a lad and many a lass had gone there before her to do the like, who were now lying yonder under the black shadow of the yew in the churchyard, with all their wishes ended. Generation after generation had come and gone, but the virtue of the spot had never failed. Gate after gate had been literally hacked and hewn to pieces, and this comparatively new one of her Uncle Tyson's was going the way

of all wishing-gates also, in spite of the threatening placard. Nor were those who wished any wiser than their forefathers. Across and along the bars ran the carven wishes, as of old, some in prose, and some in verse, but all to the same tune. House and land, and money and kine, were the things desired; nay, in one case, some visitor (hot and thirsty, doubtless, after his noonday climb) had expressed in indelible characters his longing for a Mug of Beer. But the lovers, who in reality formed ten per cent. of the worshippers at this shrine, rarely left any record of their visit, beyond the name of the desired object: MARY HARRISON was inscribed on the topmost bar twice over: once fairly cut into the wood by a skilled carver, and again rudely painted in shining characters, evidently with a huge piece of black-lead, or 'wad.' Mary well knew by whose hand each had been placed there. The handsome brunette had many a suitor among the small statesmen in the neighbourhood, but their humbler rivals, George Adams and Miles Ripson, took her romantic fancy far more than they. Both were very comely young fellows, and that they were poor, was far from an objection in her eyes. In the *Pride of the Village*, the heroine did not suffer her choice to be swayed by the base considerations of lucre, and Mary's heart had applauded her as she read. *The Maid of Buttermere*, on the other hand, afforded a terrible example of the evil of suffering the affections to be dazzled by social position. 'How happy could I be with either, were other dear charmer away,' is a sentiment which is by no means peculiar to males, and I am afraid that Mary had not quite made up her mind in favour either of George or Miles.

They were equally eligible in the way of poverty and humble station—the one a soldier, and the other a worker in a wad-mine; they both expressed themselves devoted to her, and happy only in her presence. What, then, had she come to the Wishing-gate to wish for? As her soft hazel eyes roamed over the lovely scene, they suddenly lit upon a sight which brought the scarlet to her cheeks, as though a gleam from what she saw—a red coat coming through the copse—had settled on them. It was not the first time that, by the happiest chance, a suitor had found her at that spot; but something seemed to tell her that this interview would be a more serious one than any which had preceded it. She had not expected to see either of her swains that evening, for she well knew that they had been wrestling at Sandalhtwaite, and that after that healthful sport it was usual for the athletes to recreate themselves at the village inn. She was not so exacting as to have been annoyed if neither had come up to tell her the result of the day's contest; but, of course, she felt gratified by the present attention. It was certain, from George's having undertaken to bring the news, that Miles had not been, at all events, so successful as himself. Poor Miles! How his fine dark face would glow with anger, and his black eye flash fire! She was always somewhat frightened at him when his temper was roused; but still, she owned to herself that he never looked so handsome as then. The likeness, upon such occasions, between Miles and Count Conrad (surnamed the Magnificent), in the *One-handed Monk*, was quite remarkable.

Although Mary knew in her beating heart that the Sapper must be approaching very near the object of his siege, she pretended to be unconscious of his approach. Her attitude, her features

remained the same, except that into the latter was thrown a certain thoughtful tenderness, which a lover would know how to translate; not that she was a flirt, but a woman.

'Mary,' said a quiet manly voice close beside her. 'It is I; you need not start. Don't turn, don't look at me; but only tell me what you were wishing for.'

'Why should I not look at you, George Adams?'

'Because I have something here which I do not want to shew you till I have heard your wish.'

'It must be the wrestling-belt!' thought Mary, always alive to the results of heroism. 'Poor Miles!' But she said: 'I wonder what it can possibly be?'

'What were you wishing for, pretty one, when I caught you here leaning over the Lucky Gate?'

'What is that to you?'

'Much, Mary—everything!' returned George with tender gravity.

'Well, then, perhaps I was wishing—mind, I only say perhaps—that somebody might gain the belt at Sandalthwaite.'

'Then your wish is granted, pretty one: it is here, Mary. It is yours.' And he cast aslant her shoulder, as the Queen wears her Order of the Garter, the broad thick belt of leather with its huge steel-buckle, in token of his prowess in the Ring.

All pity for his absent rival was lost sight of by the blushing girl in this act of graceful homage. 'Dear George!' cried she, 'I am so glad!'

'Miles and I were the two last standers, Mary; and I "felled" him. I thought of you a deal more than of the prize. He threw me the first time, and I seemed to see him coming up here this very evening to tell you of his victory; then I said to myself: "He never, never shall." It was you who strengthened me and made me conquer. And yet, Mary, it will have been all bootless balm, unless I gain another prize from your own lips.'

'Why, I've given you one already!' exclaimed Mary, 'you ungrateful man!'

'Yes, Mary; but I want something else, sweeter even than your kisses—your promise that one day you will become my wife.'

'O George! I really must have time'—

'There is no time to lose, Mary. I shall leave this place to-morrow: our work is finished here, and we are ordered south. May I depart in comfort, knowing that you have passed your word to be true to me? It will not be so very long ere I return and claim you for my own. Mr Murphy has just promised, so soon as I obtain my discharge, to get me made an overseer at the lead-mine, through Miss Selina's influence, to whom—but that is a secret at present—he is going to be married. Come, dearest girl, say "Yes!" or you will dismiss me a most miserable man. I shall scarcely be able to stay away from you even for a few months—for I trust it need not be longer—but if you doom me to lose you for ever, ah, heaven! I could not bear it. Promise me, promise me, dear one!'

'Hush, George; there is some one calling me up at the Nook—it is Mr Wilson. Please, let me go.'

'Not till you have promised, Mary: I will have your "Yes" or "No." Oh, if you could but know how all my happiness hangs upon one little word!'

'Yes, then, dear George! I promise you to be your wife.'

'Thank you! bless you, Mary! But one kiss

more to seal the contract, and one in case I cannot get away to-morrow morning to wish you farewell. Good-bye, good-bye! I will write every week.'

So home ran Mary, with the precious belt about her, like an Amazon who had lost her quiver, only turning once upon the crown of the field where it dipped into the farm-yard, to kiss her hand; and George was left alone by the Wishing-gate, having nothing to ask there of the Powers of Good, and picturing life as full of happiness as the world beneath him was of beauty.

CHAPTER VIII.—CHANGE EVERYWHERE.

Though time and space may not be annihilated to make two lovers happy, still, it is permissible, in depicting the progress of our life-drama, to suppose the lapse of years. Let us appropriate a modest twelvemonth, to begin with; but one revolution of the seasons, yet long enough after his wife's death to admit, with one day added, of the disconsolate widower's taking another bride without remark from the Censorious, nay, long enough not only to forget the dead but the absent living. A scarcely heeded period of life to many of us, who pass to-day exactly as we passed yesterday, and as we shall pass to-morrow; but a whole existence to others, if into its space is crowded expansive Change—not necessarily of scene, or even of companionship, for in that case the life of a king's messenger would rank with that of Methuselah—but change of circumstance. Thus, Mary is still at Ander Farm, and has never been away from it, and yet the whole of her previous life seems short by comparison with this last year, during which Uncle Tyson died, and she herself became a wife. Again, at Gable End, where the shadows of its sycamores have fallen upon Parson Wilson every day for thirty years, and falls upon him still, this last year has seemed to rival all the rest for length. And he has been happy as the days were long—happier than ever before—cheered by his bright young wife, and of late by a miniature edition of her also (so delicate and precious, that for the present it is bound in flannel), in the person of an infant daughter. At Dewbank Hall, too, there has been Change, and no small change.

When Mr Woodford was first given to understand that his sister was actually engaged to Mr Claude Murphy, he could not have flown into a greater fury if she had been his favourite daughter, and had announced her intention of wedding the footman. Instead of being charmed to get rid of her, and moved to pity for the poor fellow who had taken her off his hands, he anathematised her as an old fool, and her swain as a mercenary scoundrel. Never should either of them darken his doors again. If that painter fellow flattered himself that he should ever see a shilling of the Woodford estate beyond those four thousand pounds which his wife brought him, he had never made a greater mistake in his life. He, Mr Ernest Woodford, was only two years junior to his sister, was considerably less bilious, had (by comparison) a heavenly temper, which rarely interfered with his digestion, and was thoroughly determined (and when had his will been unequal to the occasion yet?) to outlive Selina. Even if it were otherwise—though it would not be—that painter fellow would get little by his bargain: should his shrew of a wife have possession of the property for a few short years, she could still not leave a stiver behind her; he would

have nothing save what he might manage to save during that period of plenty, and, thank goodness, he was a man with whom saving was an impossibility. Evelyn Sefton—a very nice child, Evy, and growing more unlike her aunt every day—would be the sole heiress of the Woodfords: all the golden fruit that had fallen to their share during the shaking of the pagoda-tree, as well as the thousands that were coming in from the black-lead mine—for the Wad, that had once been used by the unconscious dalesmen for marking their sheep, was now worth its weight in silver, and would all be hers. Although the inscrutable intention of Providence did appear to be that no Woodford should succeed to his own vacant throne—at least there should be no Murphy; an Englishman to the backbone himself, it was a comfort to reflect that in the harvest-field of his fortunes he would have no Irish gleaner. All this, and a great deal more, he had not hesitated to tell Miss Selina, face to face, and in his worst manner; and that lady had not been backward in retort. Poor little Evy fled the room in terror at the beginning of this battle-royal between her relatives; but it would have afforded a grown-up spectator of good principles the most intense enjoyment. The quarrels of the disagreeable are pleasant to good people, and this was *such* a quarrel. The store of venom which each was wont to expend upon the human family at large, was poured out upon one another in so great profusion, that had not nature been exceptionally plentiful to them in that secretion, their gall-bladders would have been emptied for ever. There is sometimes a greater temptation to the hasty-tempered than chivalry will admit, to call a lady a fool; but to call her an *old* fool upon the occasion of her communicating to you her matrimonial engagement for the first time, is no doubt a strong expression of opinion, and quite unpardonable, if warranted by the fact. Miss Selina had not expected congratulations, nor perhaps even to win her brother's consent. She had come armed for a combat à l'outrance, with the shield of Disdain, and the cuirass of Contempt, and the greaves (if we may say so without indelicacy) of the most perfect Independence; but this shaft of her ungallant foe struck home through all her defences. She had not intended to fight, but merely to lay down her gage—"I am going to be married to Claude Murphy, Ernest"—and let her brother take it up or not as he pleased. She scarcely expected that he would give his countenance to her proposal in the least; she was not even unprepared for his remark, that she might be married at the public-house, as being an appropriate spot for the celebration of such nuptials, for that she might rely upon it no wedding-feast would be spread at Dewbank Hall. But when he went on to tell her, in as plain words as she would have used herself, had their places been reversed, that this Irish adventurer would never have offered his neck to the matrimonial noose but for those hopes (the fallacy of which he at the same time distinctly pointed out to her) which the death of young Charles Woodford had awakened within him, and wound up all with those terrible monosyllables, 'Old fool,' then Selina's sword of sharpness leaped from its scabbard.

Man in his anger will say many things which he had better not have uttered, and which he will afterwards wish unsaid; but woman, once driven beyond the limits of prudence, will say anything and everything; not only the (dis-

agreeable) truth, the whole (disagreeable) truth, and nothing but the (disagreeable) truth, but even more than the (disagreeable) truth; her imagination combines with her malice, and the result is something similar to Greek-fire, a missile scarcely permitted by the laws of war. We males have no reason to plume ourselves upon any great superiority in this matter. If Jones wounds our *amour propre*—derides our abilities as a divine, a lawyer, or (especially) as a professor of literature—and we come to hear of it through some good-natured friend, we go about 'saying things' at the club which cannot be quite justified, about 'that fellow Jones,' don't we? And yet what is such a provocation as calling one a dull writer—and I, for one, would try to be 'even' with the utterer of such an atrocious slander, I confess—compared to the *spretæ injuria formæ* in the case of a woman?

I don't know what Miss Selina actually said to her brother, and probably, in the whirlwind of her wrath, she herself did not know, but it was something that turned the Black Squire to that colour which the sea wears when the dark weed beneath it is beheld through the shallow green. The word 'Clementina,' however, occurred in the sentence more than once; and the result was, as her brother had warned her it would be when she last uttered it in his study on the day when he received the news of his nephew's death: Selina Woodford left Dewbank Hall that very day for her mother's house at Leamington, where she arrived on the second night, and by her unexpected appearance in the drawing-room, where a card-party happened as usual to be assembled, caused her astonished parent to revoke in trumps. From that congenial roof (for Miss Selina had a religious horror of all cards except wedding-cards), Mr. Claude Murphy carried her off as his bride a few weeks later. Of that event, Mr. Ernest Woodford received no intimation except through the columns of his *Commercial Times*, a paper which he was accustomed to peruse with sedulous care, and in which he found a small-text paragraph, uncommonly like an advertisement, setting forth that a certain well-known artist had been united in the bonds of Hymen to the sister and heir-presumptive of Ernest Woodford, Esq., the wealthy East Indian merchant, and proprietor of the newly discovered lead-mines in the neighbourhood of Sandalshwaite, Cumberland. Over this statement, the gentleman it last referred to muttered something to himself, which may perhaps have been his congratulations; but if he drank the health of the happy pair after dinner, it was in solemn silence. Uncle Ernest, indeed, as Evy observed, was growing very silent, which formerly was not the case, and when he did speak—and this was a still greater change—his words and manner were conciliating and kind. 'Little Evy,' said he, 'you are the only one now your old uncle has left to him. You are the last of the Woodfords: remember that.' He gave into her charge all the keys of the house except that of the cellar, and bade her be his housekeeper from henceforth; and the good little domestic creature soon learned to order the things her uncle liked for dinner, and to make him as comfortable as his disposition would permit him to be. It was his whim that she should sit at the head of his table even when Mr. Wilson and his new wife dined at the Hall, as well as on those much more frequent occasions when Dr. Warton looked in for pot-luck,

and sat with her uncle in his study over their cigars and whisky and water, long after she was asleep in her tiny bed, dreaming of dead Charlie. It was her own request that she should wear mourning, and as everything she now asked was granted, she wore it, looking inexpressibly sweet and sad in her sable garments, and, except for the cap, like an inconsolable duodecimo widow. It did not displease her uncle that she had put away out of sight every relic of the poor lost lad—the hockey club that used to stand with the umbrellas in the hall, and the fishing-rod that hung over it—and carried the books that he used to call his own up to her private chamber: nor was his name ever mentioned by either herself or her uncle, although they both thought of him not a little (and she indeed almost perpetually) in their very different fashions.

Matters had thus gone on, as we have said, for about a twelvemonth, when there arrived one morning, while Evy was making tea at the breakfast-table, and waiting for her uncle (who was getting very late in his habits), a note for the latter by the post, directed in the well-known hand of Aunt Selina. It was usually a good hand in point of plainness, though a skimpy, starved-sort of autography too, as though the writer grudged the ink, and forbore to bear hard upon her pen, for fear the point should wear out; but on this occasion, the letters were ill-formed and shaky, as though the writer were either intoxicated (which of course was out of the question) or in ill health.

'This will make Uncle Ernest very angry,' thought little Evy, for the most casual mention of Miss Selina by any of the servants would make him cross for the day; 'and that is unfortunate, since I have got to ask him a favour this morning for poor George.'

Nor was the child's apprehension at all unfounded.

'What's this?' cried her uncle, his quick eye falling upon the letter in question, the instant he entered the room. 'Who brought it? Who dared to bring it?'

'It came by the post, uncle.'

'Of course, child; and it ought to have been put into the kitchen-fire. But fetch me one of my big envelopes, and back it shall go again unopened. Unless she's greatly altered, Sister Selina won't much relish having to pay the postage.' He laughed aloud as he said these words; but while his niece went to his study to do his bidding, he scanned the obnoxious missive very carefully, and with knitted brows. 'She's ill,' muttered he, 'her nerves are gone, or she would never write like this; and yet the woman's wrought iron. Perhaps she's poor and wants money, and therefore eats humble-pie. Yet that's not like her either; still it may be so: that painter fellow is just the man to run through four thousand pounds in a twelvemonth. Gad! if I thought so, I'd open it. I would, by Heaven! and then to-day would be the happiest day of my life!'

'Here is the envelope, uncle.'

'Very well: lay it here, child.' He put his sister's letter over it, but not withinside.—'Now, what have you got for my breakfast, Evy?—A fresh trout: that is excellent.'

'Yes, uncle; George Adams caught it in the lake this morning, and brought it here at once, thinking you would like it.'

'Umph!' said Mr Woodford; 'I daresay he thought a good deal about that.'

'At all events, poor George could have meant no harm by it, uncle.'

'Yes; it is harm in a young fellow like that going a-fishing instead of going to work: I hate idleness.'

'He has got no work to go to, uncle; that was what I was going to ask you about this morning. He did expect, you know, when he got his discharge from the army, to get that place of second-over-looker at the wad-mine, which has not yet been filled up.'

'I never promised it him,' returned Mr Woodford with irritation. 'Let him go to his friend, Mr Murphy: he's no friend of mine.'

'He was a great friend of—of poor Charlie's, though, uncle. I think—I am sure it would have pleased Charlie, if he had heard that he was so well provided for. And you know how sadly he has been treated by Mary Harrison that was. Everybody pities poor George.'

'I don't, for one,' ejaculated the squire contemptuously. 'I pity no one who is fool enough to put trust in a woman. I shan't give him the place.—Now, don't go breaking your heart, Evy, about people of no consequence.—There, I'll see about it, I'll see about it! Don't bother me with any such matters now: and if you have done your breakfast, you may go, for I want to be alone for a little.'

When the child had left the room, Mr Woodford once more applied himself to the superscription of his sister's letter. 'It is certainly shaky, uncommonly shaky,' chuckled he. 'Perhaps the devil within her is really tamed. If she does want a reconciliation—which of course means Money—it would be a thousand pities not to open it. I wouldn't lose the gratification of writing No, for half the wad-mine.'

THE OLD COIN.

A MASSY lump of brass and bronze,
Moulded by ponderous blow on blow,
For Nero or Vespasian's son,
In ages dim and long ago.

A cruel mouth, a swinish chin,
A wolfish eye, almost erased;
But half the date—a victory—
Two words, and those almost defaced.

Where is the Golden Palace now
That on the Palatine arose?
Where are the statue-guarded doors?
Where are the temple-porticoes?

For discs of metal shaped like this,
Swords have been drawn and Lethe crossed;
For this, in greedy hope, men's souls
Have been by passions tempest tossed.

This is Ambition's royal reward;
This is a buried Caesar's fame:
Upon a lump of rusty bronze,
The two-thirds of a doubtful name.

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